*173 we have just noted, would have formed an unbreakable bloc
614 if both elements had not been affected by the ferment of dissociation referred to in the course of this study.

The to-da derived the larger portion of its prosperity from
[487] the Niger. Communication and transport could most easily be maintained along this artery, and it was the need to make the greatest possible use of the river that brought about the organization of the Somono.

Etymologically, the word Somono simply means "fisher-
[101] man." Like any trade practiced exclusively, professional fish-
[564] ing involves a certain loss of standing, and that is why the Somono are said to be people of caste. This status is especially due to the supremacy of the clan over the Somono, without whom it could not have exploited the river.

614 After using force to annex them, Mamari added to their
564 number by assigning some of the furu-ba dyon' to the group, so
*173 that the Somono were soon closely dependent on the furu-ba. At the orders of the fama and his agents, they were required to
● [505] maintain ferry service across the river, to provide river transport in both directions, and to pay a fee in kind on their catch, with the understanding that they could continue to live according to the traditional Somono customs.

In return, the Somono were under the protection of the clan and their leaders benefitted from the generosity of the fama. They would occasionally be given a share of booty. [324]

Little by little, the few original Somono families were lost in the flood of newcomers. These included: the furu-ba dyon' who had become Somono on orders from the fama; people of diverse origins who had adopted Somono status of their own accord because they found it better than their own; and finally, the children of both, who were Somono by birth.

It was likewise the exploitation of the property of the
[233] to-da that brought about a similar organization of the shepherds, or Peul. Let us first note that this term has no ethnic significance; it designates all who raise or watch over animals as a regular and professional occupation. Here, too, there is a kind of loss of standing, since a working shepherd could hardly do without a sponsor and must attach himself to a master. This is the case for

A great effort has been
654 made to improve the exploitation of livestock; in this regard [38]
232 one must mention the stock-raising experimental center of the Service Zootechnique, the Serotherapy Center and the Farm School of Sotuba, near Bamako; the sheepfolds at El Oualadji, Nioro, and Nara; and the stallion corrals at Nioro, Ouahigouya, Mopti, Bandiagara, Gao, Bamako, and Goundam.

III. Commerce

651 The Bambara region follows the commercial regulations of
441 French West Africa. It is, in particular, subject to the customs regulations put into force November 30, 1950 (Journal officiel A.O.F., No. 2507 [French West African Official Journal]), which include a tax on merchandise of whatever origin and a customs surtax on each product coming within the framework of the international conventions to which France has subscribed.

Customs receipts for 1950 were 131,000,000 francs for the whole of the Sudan. They reveal a rather mediocre commercial traffic, definitely inferior to that of Senegal for example (3,325,000,000 francs). This is partly due to the geographic situation of the country and to the state of the means of communication, and partly to the limited resources of the region.

A. External Commerce

a. Means of Communication

439 External commerce has three outlets: Dakar, Conakry, Abidjan. It is through these outposts that the Bambara world communicates with Europe and the United States. This is why the continental isolation of the country remains a formidable impediment to outside commerce.

505 The means of communication remain very mediocre across this country so inordinately spread out. Navigable waterways are irregular. Commercial navigation is possible as follows: on the Senegal from Saint-Louis to Kayes from July to October, and up to Podor during the rest of the year; on the Niger, by steamer during the flood period and by barge the rest of the year, between Koulikoro

505 amd Ansongo (1,400 kilometers), and between Bamako and Kouroussa (374 kilometers); on the Bani from San up to Mopti on the Niger. In addition, a very large number of native pirogues carrying merchandise swarm on the navigable waterways. These waterways, of strictly local value, remain impassable too long at a time to
496 maintain substantial trade. The railways constructed for strategic purposes are designed to link the ports with the navigable canals and form no sort of network among themselves. Moreover, the gauge (one meter) is weak, single, and capable of carrying only a small volume of traffic. The four principal lines are: Dakar-Niger up to Koulikoro, 1,697 km. and 128 stations; Conakry-Niger, 662 km., 40 stations, reaching as far as Kankan where the Milo is navigable; Abidjan-Niger, 834 km., and Benin-Niger, 579 km. Passenger and freight traffic is constantly increasing, and the insuf-
491 ficiency of the railways is compensated for by road traffic. Every secondary center may be reached by truck in the dry season, but, except in the immediate suburbs of the towns [39] most of the roads are simple unpaved tracks. Watercourses are crossed by ferries, submerged causeways, or temporary log bridges ... The road network is 80 times less dense than in France, for the rainy season causes annual havoc. Its maintenance is very burdensome. Bridges are rare, but there are some fine ones that must be mentioned: over the Bagolé, over the Baoulé, and over the Milo at Kankan. Roads are classified as: inter-colonial (linking territories of French West Africa -- one of these routes links Bamako to one of the three great trans-Saharan tracks which go towards North Africa), roads of general usefulness, and roads of local usefulness.

509 Finally, an air network tends to develop more and more. One line already plies between Dakar, Bamako, Boho-Dioulasso, Ouagadougou, Niamey, and Kamo. Another serves Dakar, Kayes, Bamako, Bobo-Dioulasso, and Abidjan. Other lines just recently created have not as yet definitely fixed routes. We will mention the lines: Dakar-Bamako-Ségou-Bobo-Dioulasso-Serkédougou-Abidjan; the line, Dakar-Ségou-Mopti-Gao; that of Dakar-Boké-Conakry-Kankan; and finally a line used chiefly to transport meats in dry periods, Dakar-Kayes-Nioro-Bamako. These interior lines make up a network of connecting lines for the distribution of passengers and cargo landed at Kakar by the long-range carriers.

775 walking in the direction of Kita. They stopped in a village near this city and were lodged by a Malinke (2). On entering the courtyard,

2. A Mandingo tribe whose group "taboo" is the Mali or Mani, the hippopotamus.

they stopped dumfounded, for they found sitting on a mat an elderly man whose features were familiar to them, -- wasn't he the old man of Fobougou? It was he, for he greeted them and asked them news of the old men of the village and of the members of his family. After supper they returned to the courtyard, wanting to sit near their old man, whom they had found again so far from his native land, but he was no longer there, and their host told them that he had fled, refusing to tell what direction he was taking.... "That was our old man," say the people of Fobougou with great conviction, for they believe in this as in the capture of Ségou. "Our young people saw him, talked with him, and some had known him before his death. Without doubt," they add, "he must have suffered in his family while he was alive, so he did not dare come back to life in our midst." This story, which I heard in Fobougou itself, is told more or less everywhere with a few variations; in September, 1908, between Ségou and Koulikoro on the Niger, one of the laptot (3) told it to his colleagues as they squatted

• [505]

3. Negroes who serve as sailors on the river are called laptot.

around him in a circle.

775 531 576 In Ouentja, a village an hour and a half or two hours at the most from the Bani, on the road between Ségou and Koutiala, the people have such great respect for one of their deceased former chiefs, the old sagi, that they avoid saying his name. They have even changed or rather abbreviated one of their greetings, and while almost everywhere else strangers are greeted with the words: "i dangha sagi," here they say to you only: "i danghana (4)." According to the /60/